NGOs and trade unions working together for a fair globalisation
History

The Global Network was founded in 2001 by SOLIDAR (a European network of social justice NGOs) and the International Federation of Workers’ Education Associations (IFWEA) (an international organisation responsible for the development of workers’ education) to strengthen the capacity of NGOs and trade unions to engage in dialogue with decision makers at the local, national, regional and international level.

Who we are

The Global Network is a worldwide alliance of NGOs and trade unions in four regional networks: Asia, Arab Countries, Africa and Latin America. The network is brought together by the organisations concerns and interests in the effects of globalisation and decisions taken by international organisations. For a full list of members, please see poster overleaf.

How we work

The Global Network aims to improve the capacity of NGOs and trade unions to engage in dialogue with key decision makers at the local, national, regional and international levels by organising public events, awareness-raising activities, seminars to build alliances and develop strategies, educational activities and reports on key issues.
Who we work with

The Global Network is an alliance-building forum. It works with representative workers’ organisations, progressive civil society, social movements, and community-based organisations.

How we are funded

The Global Network is funded by contributions from SOLIDAR and IFWEA member organisations, as well as project funding from European and national institutions.
Giving a voice to vulnerable workers
Global network success stories

Domestic workers rights

Domestic workers in Ghana, like most informal economy workers, are largely excluded from social security coverage. Most domestic workers involved in the Global Network project (through workshops organised by Ghana Trades Union Congress - TUC) did not know they had rights to social security benefits and those who requested them were turned down. They did not know they could report their employers’ violations and hence had accepted their situations. Many employers were also ignorant of their obligation to pay social security contributions on behalf of their domestic workers.

Justina Donnawun is a 31 year old divorcee with a 9 year old child. She secured employment as a domestic cook through the Public Recruitment Centre of the Department for Labour. Her employer offered accommodation, three meals a day and a salary of GH150 (70 Euros) per month. Although her employer said she would pay her social security contribution on her behalf, Justina explained that she had lost her ID card and the employer never followed up.

Through the Know Your Rights workshops, organised by Ghana TUC (member of the Global Network) together with domestic workers’ representatives and the International Union of Food Workers’ African Regional Women’s Coordinator - domestic workers got to know about their rights to social security and about the ongoing campaign to ratify the International Labour Organisation’s Convention on domestic workers.

“Only domestic workers know their needs and therefore should be involved in any talks about social benefit programmes and social laws.”

Myrtle Witbooi, Secretary General of South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU).
Two thirds of kindergarten workers in the West Bank do not obtain paid annual leave, sick leave or maternity leave and 86% do not obtain severance pay. A report published by the Democracy and Workers’ Rights Center (DWRC) in Palestine (Global Network Coordinator for Arab Countries) denounced this situation as well as the extremely low wage levels in the sector.

DWRC has worked closely with the Kindergarten Workers’ Union to enable them to voice their demands to decision-makers and strengthen their Union. DWRC helped raise awareness on the situation of these workers and supported the opening of a new branch for their union in Hebron governorate and, through training courses and seminars, kindergarten workers were encouraged to join the union.

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“Achieving progress on guaranteeing freedom of association and the right to organise [is crucial] so that workers can elect their representatives and bargain for their rights.”

Hasan Barghouti, Director of Democracy and Workers’ Rights Centre (DWRC) in Palestine.
Migrant workers are workers

In Hong Kong, there are around 300,000 domestic workers, the majority of whom are from Indonesia, The Philippines, Thailand and Nepal. Even though in principle, migrant workers are protected by the same labour laws as all workers in Hong Kong, in reality, immigration laws prevent them from having full coverage. For example, migrant workers can face difficulties in changing employers as immigration law only gives them two weeks stay in the country before they must find alternative employment.

The Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU) (member of the Global Network) has been working with domestic workers for two decades and has focused on the importance of solidarity between workers as a lever to ensure decent work for all. HKCTU has managed to use the basic principle of workers solidarity – all workers working together for their rights and for decent work – to shift the power struggle from one between national and non-national worker, to one between worker and the barriers that stand in the way of accessing decent work for all.

In November 2010 HKCTU supported the creation of the Federation of Asian Domestic Workers’ Union (FADWU). FADWU brings together domestic workers from Hong Kong, Nepal, The Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. The concept of solidarity for all workers has snowballed and local committees now actively want to include representatives from the new Union at meetings, and are even providing translation services for them.

For HKCTU, the process of migrant workers integrating into local communities and their local trade union movements is as important as seeking changes in labour laws.

● ● ● “We have to do away with the “migrant workers” tag. Domestic workers are already so fragmented that we need to be able to stand up as one, migrant and non-migrant, and demand our rights.”

Elizabeth Tang, former Chief Executive of the HKCTU and Vice-Chair of the Global Network.
Women’s rights

Work in the female-dominated Peruvian agro-industry is characterised by long hours and a lack of maternity or childcare provision. Under the current law, an employer can require a 20-hour workday and not have to pay overtime as long as the average workday for the contract period averages eight hours or less. Precarious, short-term contracts which could be ended at any time if there is any sign that a worker could “cause trouble” are the rule. To prevent union organising, workers are rotated and their families moved between different plantations and companies.

In Agrokasa, the largest Peruvian asparagus company, workers have tackled the challenge and a trade union was formed in 2007. Programe Laboral de Desarrollo (PLADES) (Global Network Coordinator for Latin America) in coordination with the Regional Workers’ Federation of Ica set-up an Information Office on Decent Work in Agro-export to provide advice and training on workers’ rights:

- “...the existence of trade unions provides the possibility for collective bargaining, the best mechanism to fight the lack of legal protection created by unfair legislation”.
  
  Rocio Campana, Programe Laboral de Desarrollo (PLADES).

At the same time, in Ica, campaigns for women’s rights have also been carried out by PLADES:

- “Women, often the head of the family, experience pervasive discrimination as a result of very long working hours, lack of pregnancy and maternity rights, no childcare facilities during the working day, and no time to participate in capacity training and union activities. The problem is exacerbated by gender segregation in the workplace”.
  
  Rocio Campana, Programe Laboral de Desarrollo (PLADES).

To meet this challenge, unions have now established a Women’s Secretariat and special gender clauses were added to the ‘List of Demands’ to ensure pregnancy and maternity protection.
NGOs and trade unions working together for a fair globalisation

**Latin America**
- **Argentina**
  - Tripartite Committee of Participation for Justice and Human Rights (CETDH)
- **Bolivia**
  - Centro de Acción al Cambio (CENAC)
- **Brazil**
  - Instituto Observatorio Social (IOS)
- **Chile**
  - Centro de Estudios Nacionales de Desarrollo Alternativo (CENDA)
  - Centro de Estudios Mujer y Trabajo
- **Colombia**
  - Escuela Nacional Sindical (ENS)
  - Centro de Investigación Laboral y Asesoría Sindical (CIKAS)
- **Ecuador**
  - Servicio Piz y Justicia Social (SERPA)
- **El Salvador**
  - Grupo de Movimiento Independiente de El Salvador (GIMIES)
- **Mexico**
  - Centro de Investigación Laboral y Asesoría Sindical (CIKAS)
- **Peru**
  - Programa Laboral de Desarrollo (PLADES)
- **Uruguay**
  - Instituto Guevara Duarte

**Africa**
- **Ghana**
  - Ghana Trade Union Congress (GTUC)
- **Kenya**
  - Central Organisation of Trade Unions (COTU)
- **Namibia**
  - Labour Resource and Research Institute (LARRI)
  - Labour Research Service (LRS)
- **South Africa**
  - Labour Research Service (LRS)
- **Zambia**
  - Workers' Education Association of Zambia (WEAZ)
  - Labour & Economic Research Institute of Zambia (LEDRIZ)
  - Center for Labour and Social Studies of Zambia (CLASS-ZM)

**Asia**
- **Bangladesh**
  - Bangladesh Institute for Labour Studies (BILS)
- **Cambodia**
  - Cambodian Women's Movement Organization (CWMO)
  - Community Legal Education Centre (CLEC)
- **Hong Kong**
  - Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU)
  - Asia Monitor Resource Centre (AMRC)
- **India**
  - Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA)
  - National Alliance of Street Vendors of India (NASVI)
- **Indonesia**
  - Indonesia Metal Federation (FSPM)
- **Nepal**
  - Center for Labour and Social Studies Nepal (CLASS-NEPAL)
- **Pakistan**
  - Labour Education Foundation (LEF)
- **Philippines**
  - Labour Education and Research Network (LEARN)
- **Sri Lanka**
  - Institute of Social Development

**Arab Countries**
- **Egypt**
  - Land Center for Human Rights
- **Iraq**
  - Al-Mosul Organization for Human Rights
  - Iraq Center for Trade Union Culture
- **Jordan**
  - Change Academy for Democratic Studies and Development
- **Lebanon**
  - Labour Trade Union Center for Training
- **Morocco**
  - Centre des Droits des Gens
  - Association des Droits de l'Homme
  - Centre de Documentation et des Etudes Syndicales et Ouvrières
- **Palestine**
  - Democracy and Workers Rights Centre (DWMRC)
  - Palestinian Working Women Society for Development (PWWSD)
  - Federation of Unions of Palestinian Universities Professors and Employees
- **Tunisia**
  - Réseau Arabe d'Education - CIC Section
  - Social Development and Empowerment Center
- **Yemen**
  - Tamkeen Development Foundation

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To reach the objective of a decent work and decent life for all, the Global Network aims to promote human, social and economic rights by improving the ability of workers’ movements and civil society organisations to take action through exchanges of experience, joint actions and the adoption of an alternative agenda at local, national, regional and international levels.

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Responsible editor: Conny Reuter
Printed on recycled paper
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